



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SPECIFICATION

for

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE FRAMEWORK

This specification must be read in conjunction with the general specification. Not all sections of this specification will apply to every call-off.

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1. Objective

The Service Provider is expected to provide a high quality environmental maintenance service by employing professionally trained and skilled staff. It is expected that the maintenance regimes will be carried out with professionalism and pride and that they will generate compliments rather than be a source of complaints.

The Service Provider will be expected to:

- Promote the strategic objectives of Members. In particular, they will be expected to promote sustainability by avoiding the unnecessary use of harmful or environmentally sensitive substances (chemicals, peat etc);
- Promote community involvement by being supportive to community groups, volunteers, wardens etc. who wish to become involved in green space issues;
- Act positively to correct problems as they arise;
- Take proactive responsibility for dealing with problems such as vandalism and graffiti as soon as it is discovered;
- Take pride in the work undertaken and produce high quality outcomes;

Poor working practices and inappropriate conduct must be dealt with effectively by the Service Provider, to eliminate practices such as vehicles driving over the grass, mowing and shredding of clearly visible litter, failing to remove rubbish and/or dumping on the Member's sites.

2. Scope

The areas to be maintained by the Service Provider generally include all grassed areas, landscaped areas, and hard surfaces within the overall site boundaries and hedges and trees that may form part of the boundary.

3. Mobilisation

The Service Provider will work with the Member during the first 12 months of any contract to review the measures and data upon which the programme is based. Any variance identified after the first 12 months shall be at the Service Provider's risk.

4. Litter

The Member's sites should be maintained free from fly tipped rubbish and in a litter free condition after each site visit. Where applicable, all bins should be emptied at a frequency agreed with the Member.

5. Leaf Clearance

During period of leaf fall, hazardous, problematic and unsightly accumulations of leaves may occur, the Service Provider should remove all leaf fall from hard surface areas/paths/steps as soon as is practicable. All leaves should be removed from grassed areas before damage to the turf can occur.

6. Dog Fouling

All open spaces should be kept free from dog fouling to allow users and visitors to enjoy the sites without fear of contamination. The Service Provider should assist this aim by removing contamination and ensuring that if applicable dog bins are emptied regularly.

7. GRASSED AREAS

All grassed areas have been classified as: ORNAMENTAL or AMENITY.

The intention of this section is to ensure that throughout the year the grass shall look presentable and be of suitable length.

The machinery used must be suitable for the area to be cut and the type of machine must be specified in the works programme for each location. This may include cut and collect, cut and mulch or for larger areas tractor mounted mowers. Where the grassed areas have a metal railing perimeter fence and mowers are unable to cut underneath the fence then the grass must be strimmed at the same time as the grass mowed.

Before commencing grass cutting, the Service Provider shall inspect and remove from site all debris, litter and obstacles which may cause damage or injury or prevent the clean mowing of any grass area. The shredding of litter is not acceptable. If litter is accidentally shredded following mowing operations, it must be removed.

Mowing rounds shall be devised to ensure that all areas are cut at the same frequency. All cut and collect sites shall have the cuttings removed from site.

Grass cutting shall be undertaken so as to avoid causing damage to the surface. Where the Service Provider temporarily halts grass cutting for a period of more than 3 days e.g. due to wet ground conditions, the Service Provider shall inform the Member.

8. Ornamental Grassed Areas

These areas of fine turf are normally situated in high profile areas or at locations where a higher quality of maintenance is required. These areas would normally include features such as flowerbeds, shrub beds and rose gardens, which provide an aesthetically pleasing backdrop. It is expected that these areas would require a higher maintenance regime than that of the Amenity areas.

These areas should provide:

- Grass no longer than 35 mm and no shorter than 15 mm as per the table below;
- Uniform cut including perimeter edges/obstacles;
- Clean, clipping-free, rubbish free, litter and debris-free finish;
- Green healthy looking sward, free from unsightly weeds, moss, bare patches – all year round;
- Paths and surroundings free of clippings;
- Edges to beds should be maintained to provide neat, tidy and aesthetically pleasing perimeter, sympathetic to the site design. Grass surrounding tree trunks is to be hand cut to prevent strimmer damage;

Grass Cutting Performance Standards – ORNAMENTAL

Mowing Period	Minimum Height	Maximum Height
Apr – Sept	15 mm	35 mm
Oct – Feb	20 mm	40 mm
March	20 mm	35 mm

9. Amenity Grassed Areas

These are usually public open spaces where an above average quality finish is required. It is expected that these areas would require a less intense regime than that of the Ornamental grassed areas.

These areas should provide:

- Appearance of health sward;
- No unsightly weeds, litter, debris or bare patches;
- Height of grass between 25 mm and 100 mm as per the table below;
- All areas uniformly cut including perimeter edges and obstacles;
- Edges to beds should be maintained to provide neat, tidy and aesthetically pleasing perimeter, sympathetic to the site’s design. Grass surrounding tree trunks is to be hand cut to prevent strimmer damage;
- Wild flowers and daffodils that are growing through the grass should not be mowed while in bloom. They should be left until the flowers have died away and for 6 weeks thereafter. Wild/rough grass areas may then be cut using a flail-mower.

Grass Cutting Performance Standards – AMENITY

Mowing Period	Minimum Height	Maximum Height
Apr – Sept	25 mm	75 mm
Oct – Mar	30 mm	100 mm

10. FOOTPATHS AND OTHER HARD SURFACES

11. Footpaths

Paths should be clean, tidy, and free from rubbish, litter, debris, weeds and dog fouling;

- Those paths which are identified as important and well used, should be inspected on the day of the service being delivered to ensure they meet the required standard;
- At times of inclement weather, designated paths should be free of snow and ice;
- All gullies/grids should be free of debris and maintained in good working order;

- Footpaths should be fit for the designated purpose. Areas prone to flooding, potholes etc. should be reported to the Member immediately for remedial action.

12. Hard Surfaces

- These surfaces include footpaths, roadways, car parks and open spaces. They should all be maintained in a manner that fits their purpose;
- Non grassed areas (tarmac, paved and cinder) within the boundary of the sites are to be maintained to provide safe, clean, rubbish/litter and leaf free surfaces;
- The edges of grassed areas should not be allowed to overgrow or encroach by more than 50 mm in Amenity areas and 25 mm in Ornamental areas;
- Fence lines should be free from weeds including self-sown trees and weeds;
- Gullies/grids/similar surface water drainage systems should be cleared on a periodic basis to keep them free from blockages;
- The Service Provider shall spot treat the appropriate herbicide to hard surfaces. This is to maintain a weed free condition. Each treatment should be followed up by the removal of dead weeds when the herbicide has taken effect.

13. Weed control and excessive vegetation

The Service Provider shall apply the appropriate herbicide to the specified parts of grassed areas, shrub beds, hedge and tree bases to maintain a 100% weed free condition. This also includes the removal of large dead weed, brambles and saplings of self setting trees. The Service Provider shall carry out any additional spot treatment required during the growing season. Areas to be maintained weed free include wall and fence lines, hedge bases, tree bases, around street furniture.

On Education sites any fertiliser and weed killer used must be non-toxic and readily absorbed into the ground. Hazard signs must be displayed when undertaking such operations. Such operations should not be undertaken when students are present.

Annual weeds in the first season will be treated by additional cuts with all cut materials removed from site and not left for mulching.

Perennial weeds can be treated either by spot treatment or by tri-annual application of an appropriate selective weed killer subject to the above, subject to agreement with the particular establishment.

14. Gritting and snow clearance

Gritting and snow clearance shall be determined upon live meteorological forecasts. Preventative gritting and reactive snow clearance shall be undertaken to agreed routes without the need for Member instruction. The service will be available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week including all UK Bank Holidays. Additionally, within 1 hour of the emergency call, resources must be re-assigned and a gritting/snow team despatched as instructed.

Generally salt will only be used on roads and pathways. Standard gritting salt will be spread using a spreader at a rate of 40 grams per square meter to and/or in sufficient quantities to

ensure surfaces are safe. Care must be taken when applying the salt that it is not spread onto surrounding vegetation.

15. PLANTED AREAS

16. Floral Bedding

These important green space features represent a much-loved aspect of local identity, bring colour and interest to improve the resident's quality of life. The Service Provider will be required to provide floral colour for two seasonal schemes: - Winter and Summer.

- Completed beds must comply with specified design to provide a uniform display over the full area of the bed;
- Varieties of plants to be used, including bulbs, should be true to type, healthy, free from pest and disease and in prime condition at the time of planting;
- Beds must be well-prepared, of good horticultural standards, and produce a good display and plant vigour throughout the season;
- Beds must be maintained to a high horticultural standard throughout the year and be aesthetically pleasing, free from rubbish/litter, weeds and disease.

17. Rose Beds

Rose Beds within Member sites have been created to provide a traditional high quality summer display of colour and fragrance. They are important design features, which should contribute significantly to the character and beauty of the locations.

They should be maintained to provide:

- Uniform plant coverage of the bed area;
- Healthy plants free from pest, disease and herbicide damage;
- Maximum flowering encouraged by dead-heading;
- Maintained to a high horticultural standard throughout the year – aesthetically pleasing, free from litter, debris and weeds;
- Good soil conditions and husbandry, which should be achieved by the addition of appropriate organic material and fertiliser;
- Plants that are pruned to a good horticultural standard, to enhance and promote healthy flowering and general plant vigour.

18. Shrub Beds

Shrub beds contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the local area, providing structure, colour, form and texture to the landscape. This in turn makes the area attractive for occupiers and visitors. It also helps to attract business and inward investment. Proper maintenance should ensure their attractiveness and longevity.

They should be maintained to provide:

- Uniform plant cover at all times;

- Removal of dead/diseased material;
- Pruning is required by the species for health, growth, vigour and flowering. It is anticipated that annual pruning will be required for the following species:
 - Buddleia
 - Cornus
 - Forsythia
 - Willow
 - Species and shrub roses.
- Beds that are maintained throughout the year so as to be aesthetically pleasing, free from litter, weeds, brambles, pest and disease, including debris from self-seeding saplings.

19. Natural Bulb Areas

Natural bulb areas are provided to give a seasonal impact, colour and interest. They are much loved by the public and require careful knowledgeable maintenance to ensure that they do not degenerate over time.

- Plants must be allowed to complete their growth cycle before mowing takes place.
- The first cut should take place at least six weeks following the completion of flowering but not more than eight weeks;
- All clippings should be removed from site;
- The areas should then revert to the regime of the surrounding grass.

20. HEDGES AND TREES

21. Hedges

Hedges have many functions in the design of green space including compartmentalising sites, screening or sheltering. They should be maintained to suit their purpose, be aesthetically pleasing and cause no problems for users.

22. Hedges Ornamental

Hedges should be cut back to designated size with any extension growth no longer than 300 mm.

- The profile of the hedge should be narrower at the top compared with the base to encourage uniformity, compact growth and well furnished to the base so as to prevent damage from snow;
- Any dead or diseased plant material should be removed and gaps in the hedge replenished;
- The hedge and base should also be free of litter debris, clippings and weeds.

23. Hedges Amenity

Hedges should be kept to designated size with any extension growth no longer than 600 mm;

- In general, all surfaces shall be cut back to the previous year's growth twice a year. The timing of these cuts shall depend on the growing season.
- The profile of hedges should be narrower at the top compared with the base, to encourage uniformity, compact growth and well furnished to the base so as to prevent damage from snow;
- Any dead or diseased plant material should also be removed and gaps in the hedge replenished;
- The hedge and base should be free of litter debris, clippings and weeds;
- Due consideration should be given to bird nesting and nature conservation issues when undertaking the management and maintenance of hedges and hedgerows.

24. Trees

Members are committed to the retention and management of their tree resources and require a high standard of maintenance and care, so as to ensure the safety of the users and visitors to the sites.

- The Service Provider will be responsible for inspecting and undertaking tree risk assessments of all trees within the contract area (that are the responsibility of the Member) on an annual basis by a suitably qualified arboriculturist. This shall include updating the tree register and reporting back to the Member (including a prioritised list of remedial recommendations).
- The Service Provider shall create (if necessary) and maintain a tree register and update it following any survey or work. The tree register must include (as a minimum): a unique identifier for each tree; the location of each tree (description and lat/long); condition assessment; last surveyed date; and any relevant information regarding the tree.
- For undertaking minor maintenance and remedial works such as removal of Epitomic Growth / Deadwood and low level pruning (e.g. overhang roads or footpaths).
- Tree stakes are to be removed when support to the tree is no longer necessary.
- All tree work undertaken must have approval from an authorised officer of the Member.
- The Service Provider shall be responsible for checking with the Local Authority regarding any Tree Preservation Orders prior to undertaking work on any tree.
- All work undertaken within the sites should be carried out with the least inconvenience to the users. Piles of debris accumulated by the Service Provider in the course of these operations should be cleared as soon as practicable.
- The Service Provider shall provide a reactive tree service where trees or branches may fall to remove the said tree/branches.

25. Play Areas & Equipment

Play areas (e.g., swings, climbing frames etc.) shall be maintained in accordance with BS EN 1176: Playground equipment and safety surfacing, and BS EN 1177: Playground safety surfacing. They shall be inspected a minimum of once per week for damage and safety. Once a year an inspection shall be carried out by an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA.

26. All Weather Sports Pitches

All Weather Pitches shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and [SAPCA Code of Practice for the Maintenance of Synthetic Surfaces](#).

Any defects in the surface (damage, rips, tear, poor seams, etc.) must be reported to the Member along with a sketch showing location and a quotation for repair.

The default scope of the Service Provider's responsibility for maintenance is outlined below unless agreed in writing otherwise as part of the call-off process:

Item	Member	Service Provider
Routine Checks	Yes	On Service Visits
Litter Collection	Yes	On Service Visits
Leaf Collection	Yes	On Service Visits
Snow Clearance	Yes	No
Drag Brush	Yes	No
Power Brush	Yes	No
Infill Replacement	No	Yes
Line Marking	No	Yes
Surface Repairs	No	Yes
Algae/moss Treatment	No	Yes
Vegetation Control	No	Yes
Carpet Replacement	No	Yes - POA

27. Outdoor Sports Pitches

Upon each visit to site the Service Provider shall carry out an inspection of the site/facilities and complete a copy of [Sport England's Daily Inspection/Pre-activity Checklist](#)

All cutting of pitches is to be undertaken at times to suit the Member and curriculum and any variations due to weather conditions is to be agreed with the Member.

September to Easter

Area	Max Length of grass	Min Length of grass
Football	50 mm	25 mm
Hockey	25 mm	15 mm
Rugby – Pitch	55 mm	50 mm
- Lines	100 mm	25 mm

Easter to September

Area	Max Length of grass	Min Length of grass
Cricket pitch	10 mm	N/A
Rounders	60 mm	20 mm
Athletics	60 mm	20 mm
Outfield	60 mm	20 mm

At the start of each season cricket tables must be rolled. Cricket tables shall be 'boxed off' and cut with a pedestrian cylinder mower.

At the end of each season the Service Provider shall repair, fill in holes, re-seed, scarify and spike as necessary to ensure a full covering of grass to the playing surface for the start of the next season having regard to the nature of the activity taking place. If this is not possible by re-seeding, the Service Provider shall arrange for re-turfing of affected areas as appropriate.

A. Goalposts

The Service Provider shall inspect all goalposts (where present) on each service visit to ensure they are safe. Any damage is to be notified to the Member. Inspection shall check:

- Loose and missing nuts, bolts, pins and other fixings;
- firm attachment to anchoring points or signs of movement in the sockets;
- bent sections or other damage to any part of the goal; and
- all identification and instruction labels are firmly attached and fully legible.

Goalposts which are “homemade”, made of wood, or that have metal cup hooks on any part of a goal frame shall be noted as such and a recommendation for a replacement made on the inspection report.

B. Markings

The Service Provider shall undertake all marking using a non-toxic materials to the requirements and tolerances of the national association of the sport involved. The Service Provider shall not mark lines with weed killer, creosote or cut and formed turfs.

The Service Provider shall refresh pitch markings after each cut or whenever they are no longer clearly visible due to either weather or wear.

28. Equipment

The Service Provider shall ensure all tools, plant and equipment is adequate for the use intended use.

The Service Provider shall at all times ensure that machines are properly guarded in accordance with the manufacturer's stipulations and with PUWER.

All mowers, gang units etc. are to have grass cuttings removed before proceeding onto roads or paths between sites.

29. Waste

The Service Provider shall remove all rubbish, clippings, cutting, pruning and other superfluous materials from site to the Member's satisfaction. The site of work is to be left clear and tidy at the end of each day.

All litter and other inorganic debris must be kept separate from soil and organic material arising from maintenance operations and remain separate during transportation and disposal. Inorganic debris must be disposed of at a licensed site. Soil and organic material shall be appropriately composting/recycled. The Service Provider shall maintain a waste carrier licence throughout the term of a contract.

No unauthorised tipping shall be carried out by the Service Provider within the contract area or any other place.

30. Miscellaneous

All other operations conducted on behalf of the Member will require approval from an authorised officer. The Service Provider will undertake this work using day rates.

Miscellaneous/Variation works could include the following:

- Removal of fly tipped waste;
- Additional Planting & Bedding Supplies;
- Remedial Works;

Should water be required for works, the Service Provider is to make their own arrangements for the supply of water and pay all fees in conjunction therewith, unless agreed otherwise with the Member.

31. Monitoring Arrangements

It is important that the implementation of any monitoring arrangements is developed in the spirit of partnership working rather than in a contractual or adversarial manner. It is the Service Provider's role generally to monitor and report to the Member on matters relating to quality standards and performance. Continuous improvement of the service being delivered and of the aesthetic appearance of the sites is crucial to achieving the values and principles of Members.

32. Monitoring

Each month the Service Provider will undertake a 10% random selection of Member sites and monitor the quality of the services being delivered. This will be reported back to an authorised officer of the Member.

Upon inspection, a grading standard will be applied to the site. This will be based on visual appearance. These are:

Grading Standard	Quality Delivered
Grade A	Exceeds all standards and requirements contained within the specification and the aesthetic appearance is neat, tidy and pleasing to the eye.
Grade B	Meets the standards and requirements contained within the specification and the aesthetic appearance is neat, tidy and pleasing to the eye.

Grade C	Fails to meet some of the standards and requirements contained within the specification and the aesthetic appearance is lacking due to incomplete or poorly performed tasks.
Grade D	Major failure to meet standards and requirements contained within the specification.

The above standards should be supported by a series of digital photographs, which will ensure the integrity of the monitoring arrangements. A written site inspection sheet should accompany the photographs, signed by the appropriate inspection officer.

33. Member Inspections

The Member will carry out its own inspection regime and report its results and any complaints from tenants/public to the Service Provider as they are available.

34. Rectification

Where monitoring has identified areas found to be in the category of Grade C or below, the Members authorised officer will be notified immediately and informed of the rectification arrangements and timescales.

The minimum timescales for rectifications are as follows:

Rectification Area	Timescale
Grass Cutting	2 days
Litter Removal	2 days
Weed Control	5 days
Tree Works	5 days
Graffiti	Same day
Fly Tipping	2 days

35. Performance Indicators and Targets

The Service Provider shall report on the following Performance Indicators, which shall be monitored on a monthly basis:

Key Performance Indicators

% of Grade A/B (Full Site) at time of monitoring

Other Performance Indicators

% of grass cut to the required measurement

% of shrubs which appear neat and tidy

% of rose bed displaying good flowering tendencies

% of rose beds which appear neat and tidy

% of bedding plants free from disease and displaying optimum flowering tendencies

% of bedding areas which appear neat and tidy

% of sites free of litter, vandalism and graffiti

% of sites free of debris.

Key Performance Indicator targets for all categories

Year	KPI
1	90%
2	92.5%
3	95%

Annex A – Mandatory Criteria

Description	Mandatory Criteria	Desirable Criteria
First Aid		All operatives Emergency First Aid at Work
Vehicles		NHSS 12D M1 Mobile Works on Single Carriageways
Waste	HSE Waste Carrier License	
Safeguarding	Basic DBS Check for all operatives. Convictions shall not mean automatic disqualification for working on a contract. Service Providers shall consider the nature of any convictions and the rehabilitation of offenders in reaching any decisions.	Safeguarding Training
Herbicides	At least 1 individual with a Certificate of Competence for the using herbicides. E.g. Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of Pesticides	
Chainsaws	At least 1 individual with a recognised and relevant Level 2/3 Award certificate relating to chainsaws.	

